



Academic Year
2004–2005

NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

SERVICE OBLIGATION AFTER GRADUATION

As an NIH Undergraduate Scholar, you will incur 1 year (52 weeks) of obligated service at the NIH for each full or partial year of support. The maximum service obligation is 4 years. Scholars are obliged to serve as full-time NIH employees in an NIH research laboratory. This fact sheet describes the post-graduation service obligation.

Service obligation

You must begin your service within 60 days of completing the requirements for your undergraduate degree, unless a deferment is granted by the NIH UGSP (see below).

The last day of the service obligation is determined in whole years from the starting date. Adjustments in the ending date may be made by the NIH if the obligation is suspended, interrupted, waived, or otherwise delayed.

Note: The end of your obligated service, of course, does not necessarily mean the end of your employment at the NIH. A primary goal of the program is to attract you to a long-term career at the NIH.

Generally, the NIH UGSP will defer the service obligation to enable you to complete accredited graduate or medical education programs. More information on these deferments is presented below.

Scholars with extreme circumstances that jeopardize the start of service may request the NIH to suspend their service obligations for up to 1 year. Such requests require a detailed written explanation and will be granted only if extreme circumstances have been documented.

Licensure requirement

Scholars who fulfill their service obligation after completion of a medical degree must meet the requirements for licensure and residency training specific to the NIH program for which they are applying. Federal employees who are medical doctors involved in clinical care are required to be licensed. Responsibility for obtaining the required license prior to the service start date rests with the scholars.

Position assignments at the NIH

Scholars must fulfill their service obligation in approved positions at NIH intramural research laboratories. These positions may include placement at NIH facilities in the following locations: Bethesda, Poolesville, Frederick, and Baltimore, Maryland; Research Triangle Park, North Carolina; Hamilton, Montana; and Phoenix, Arizona.

You will be advised about seeking a research position at the NIH. If you fail to obtain a placement in one of the listed vacancies by the deadline announced by the NIH, you will be assigned to a position.

The NIH reserves the right to make final decisions on all placements in satisfaction of its statutory requirements for placement of scholars.

Breach of contract

As explained in the fact sheet entitled *The Fine Print* and in the contract, there are substantial penalties for failing to begin or to complete the service obligations.

Deferments for graduate or medical studies

Scholars will ordinarily begin serving as full-time NIH employees within 60 days after obtaining their undergraduate degrees. Generally, the NIH UGSP will defer the post-graduation service obligation to enable scholars to complete accredited graduate or medical education programs that will lead to careers in biomedical research.

If you elect to enter an accredited graduate or medical school program immediately upon graduation, you will be provided with the policies, procedures and forms for requesting deferments and a *Deferment Request Form* to enable you to inform the NIH UGSP of your graduate study plans.

If you enter post-graduate training that is not approved for deferment, or otherwise fail to comply with the published terms and conditions of deferment, you will be subject to the breach-of-contract provisions described in the fact sheet entitled *The Fine Print* and in the contract.

Conditions of deferment

The following terms and conditions apply to the deferment of obligations:

- You must pursue training that is approved for deferment by the NIH UGSP and that does not incur conflicting service obligations.

- You must complete and return the *Deferment Request Form* or provide equivalent evidence of training by the deadline.
- You must make no change in the type or period of training without prior written approval of the NIH UGSP.
- You must notify the NIH UGSP within 15 days of moving to a new mailing address and of any changes that affect your training status.

Participants who fail to comply with these terms and conditions for deferment will be considered in breach of their contract and subject to the damages provision described in the contract.

Training for which deferments are not granted

Deferment of the service obligation will not be approved for programs that do not lead to graduate or medical degrees that prepare students for careers in biomedical research.

Deferments also cannot be granted for post-graduate medical education conducted or sponsored by a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. These programs require service obligations that would conflict with the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship service obligation.

Possible placements

The following should give you an idea of the types of placements that are possible for the post-graduation service obligation. Please note that the salary amounts indicated are those currently in effect. These may change by the time of your service.

If you have a bachelor's degree

If you have a B.S. or a B.A. degree, you may be eligible for entry-level or trainee research positions at \$26,000 to \$28,000 as of May 2003, dependent upon academic achievement and experience. Potential positions could include biologist, microbiologist, chemist, or computer specialist.

If you have a doctoral degree

If you have received a deferment and have obtained a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or M.D.), you may be eligible for a post-doctoral fellowship to fulfill the post-graduation service obligation. Post-doctoral training positions, depending upon education and experience, may start at \$34,000 to \$44,000 as of September 2003. These positions are available in two pathways:

Laboratory Research Pathway. You will engage in pure laboratory research. Applicants for this training pathway must have either a graduate doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D. or M.D./Ph.D.) or a professional degree (e.g., M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.M.D., Pharm.D., or D.V.M.), accompanied by previous research laboratory experience.

Combined Clinical and Research Pathway. You will receive clinical subspecialty training at the NIH as well as training in clinical and/or basic research. To qualify for this pathway, you must possess a degree in medicine or dentistry. The following programs are available:

- *Clinical Associate Program.* Provides the opportunity for physicians and dentists to participate in clinical and laboratory research with primary patient-care responsibilities. Fellows must have completed 2 to 3 years of post-doctoral medical or dental training. Fellows may be employed by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) as commissioned officers or as staff fellows in the civil service.

- *Research Associate Program.* Trains physicians and dentists to conduct laboratory research in the biomedical sciences that does not entail patient-care responsibilities. Applicants must have completed less than 3 years of post-doctoral laboratory research at the time of application (most have had some research experience). Appointments are in the civil service as a staff fellow or as a commissioned officer in the PHS.
- *Staff Fellowship.* Trains individuals with doctoral degrees and no more than 3 years of post-doctoral research experience to conduct biomedical laboratory research.
- *Senior Staff Fellowship.* Trains individuals with doctoral degrees who have completed 3 or more years of laboratory research experience.